

Sally Foden: Studio Visit Review



Sally with one of her paintings

Today's meeting was one with a difference, unusually for a Wednesday morning it was a studio visit to the home of Sally Foden in the delightful central Leamington oasis of Landsdowne Circus. We were welcomed with (soft!) drinks and what looked like home made cakes and biscuits in the entrance hall and then shown into the elegant, traditional shuttered front room, overlooking the Circus. This is where Sally had a table laid out with work in progress and art materials. There was also a large display of framed work on the walls. These included semiabstract landscapes and still life floral works.

We were then called through to a room at the rear of the house. 17 of us squeezed into and onto sofas and cushions, while Sally gave a short talk. We learned how she had applied to St Martins School of Art in London for fashion design and at the interview had worn a jacket of her own creation, made up from patches of various fabrics, including embroidered daisies from Granny's old table cloth. She appeared to slip as easily into the jacket now, as she must have done at 17, to a gasp from some of the audience. It was no surprise that she was offered a place.

She didn't complete the St Martin's course, finding that pattern cutting was less appealing than first thought, and transferred to the Central School to study textiles. We were shown a collection of block printed silk cloths, which demonstrated her skills as a colourist and ability with two dimensional space and pattern. At the end of her course, she was snapped up by the design world and found herself as a very busy freelance illustrator and designer, with an agent, who would negotiate seemingly very large fees, but take a hefty commission. It was a hard life, living, sleeping and working in one room, surviving in London in a precarious profession.



Sally discussing work with members

In more recent years, following marriage, children and a move to Leamington, she has painted more for leisure and pleasure, but with a desire to sell, exhibit and develop and with an energy and focus drawn from her commercial work. She uses a range of materials, perhaps the most unusual for traditional floral works, Farrow and Ball paints on heavy grade wall lining paper. The cheapness of this prevents the intimidation which can be felt beginning work on an expensive sheet of best quality water colour paper. Also, it saves a job, lining paper

Sally Foden: Studio Visit Review Continued

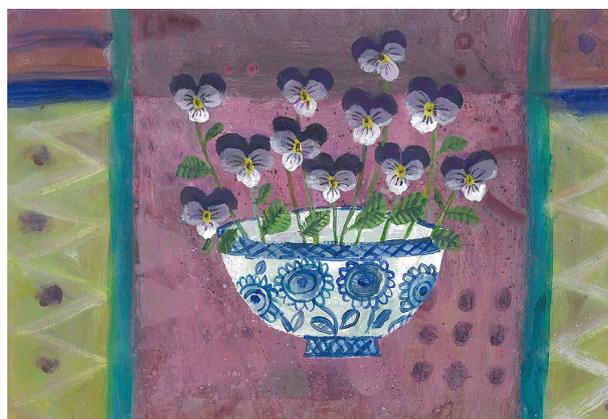


Examples of Sally's early textile work

doesn't need stretching, never mind how wet you get it.

The meeting then developed into a discussion about how to get your work shown, framing it, photographing it, digital submissions to "open" exhibitions and more, but perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the morning was the brief insight into the life and work of a truly commercial artist and illustrator, compared with that of the fine artist, oh and, of course, the opportunity to see inside one of Leamington's most sought after addresses!

Katharine Baker



Still Life



Exmoor 60 x 49 cm



Seascape

You can see more of Sally's art on her website <https://www.sallyfodenart.co.uk/>

Sally will be exhibiting at this years Open Studios at Venue 19